

VA Medical Center, Aspinwall Division,  
Laundry Building (Building No. 27)  
5103 Delafield Avenue  
Aspinwall Vicinity  
Allegheny County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5438-I

HABS  
PA,  
2-ASPWA.V,  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABS  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

VA MEDICAL CENTER  
ASPINWALL DIVISION, LAUNDRY BUILDING  
(Building No. 27)

HABS No. PA-5438-I

Location: The Laundry Building is located in the southeast quadrant of the hospital complex, on the north side of an axial road leading southeast from the main entry drive, approximately 400 feet from the end of the drive. The Medical Center is located at 5103 Delafield Avenue, Aspinwall vicinity, O'Hara Township, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

USGS Pittsburgh East Quadrangle. Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 17.594100.4483140

Present Owner: United States Veterans Administration

Present Occupant: United States Veterans Administration

Present Use: Veterans Hospital

Significance: The Laundry Building is associated with the continued expansion of the veterans' hospital facility at Aspinwall during the 1920s and 1930s. Constructed in 1936, the building served as the facility's laundry until sometime after 1955 at which time it became a research and utility facility. The building is representative of the utilitarian service buildings constructed at Aspinwall.

Part I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: 1936, 1951 addition.
2. Architect/Engineer: United States Veterans Administration.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: United States Veterans Administration.
4. Builders, contractors, suppliers: Unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: United States Veterans Administration.
6. Alterations and additions: Two single story brick wings constructed at opposite ends of southwest facade in 1955.

B. Historical Context: The construction of the Laundry Building in 1936 is associated with the continued growth and expansion of the veterans' hospital at Aspinwall. Laundry facilities were originally located on the upper floor of the Boiler House (Building No. 4), but as the size of the patient population increased during the 1930s this facility proved unable to handle the hospital's laundry in an efficient fashion. This building provided new laundry facilities on the upper floor and a paint shop, carpenter's shop and storage area on the ground floor.

The building was constructed on the site of the complex's greenhouse. The new building was designed in the utilitarian style adopted for other service buildings at the facility and was located along the northeast side of an asphalt roadway between the Attendant's Quarters (Building No. 6) and the Storehouse (Building No. 5). The building was constructed into a gently sloping hillside, permitting the two-story structure to appear as a single story building when viewed from the landscaped grounds surrounding the Infirmary Building.

In 1951 two small wings were constructed at either end of the building's southwest facade. These wings facilitated the issuing and receiving of laundry. The building most recently served as a research and utility building. It is presently vacant.

Part II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Utilitarian.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Two-story U-shaped building built into a slope. The lower, or ground, story is only exposed on the northeast and southeast facades. The main block of the building measures approximately 116 feet by 42 feet, while the two projecting wings each measure approximately 32 feet by 33 feet.
2. Foundations: Reinforced concrete.
3. Walls: Brick walls to below grade with cast stone string course located below a cast stone parapet wall coping.
4. Structural systems, framing: One-way concrete slab construction including columns, beams, and floor, with a metal roof truss.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: Concrete steps with pipe railing are located at the inner faces of the two wing additions.
6. Chimneys: None.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The southeast, rear, facade contains four, two-leaf paneled wood doors with nine lights. A seven-light transom surmounts each door. The west wing on the southwest facade contains a pair of wood sliding doors with six-lights and a seven-light transom. The inner face of this same wing contains a four-light wood door with transom. The east wing contains metal replacement doors in original openings.
  - b. Windows and shutters: The wings contain eight-light metal awning sash. The main block contains metal sash consisting of a fixed six-light upper sash above a six-light awning sash. The windows in the southwest facade are paired, as are forty percent of those in the northeast facade. All window openings have cast stone sills.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Flat built-up roof.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Cast stone coping atop brick parapet.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor Plans: Both the ground floor and first floor consist of an open plan with minimal structural tile partitions.
- 2. Stairways: None.
- 3. Flooring: Concrete.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finishes: Painted brick, exposed structural tile, and exposed concrete.
- 5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Metal doors and frames.
  - b. Windows: Windows set into brick, tile, or concrete walls without trim or ornamentation.
- 6. Decorative features and trim: No significant decorative features exist other than those addressed previously.
- 7. Hardware: Brass and aluminum.
- 8. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: Space heaters located in roof trusses.
  - b. Lighting: Incandescent and florescent lights.
  - c. Plumbing: Utilitarian toilet rooms on each floor.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The principal facade faces southwest and is setback slightly from the roadway. The two-story northeast facade is fully exposed due to the sloping site topography.

2. Historic landscape design: The building is placed into the 1924 landscape design, which created a campus-like setting of buildings, lawns, and tree-lined walks and roads. This utilitarian building is grouped with three other service buildings into a small complex of structures that housed the hospital's service and maintenance facilities.
3. Outbuildings: None.

### Part III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: Located at Engineering Services, VA Medical Center, Oakland Division, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- B. Early Views: Located at Engineering Services, VA Medical Center, Oakland Division, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- C. Interviews: Personnel, VA Medical Center, Aspinwall Division, O'Hara Township, Pennsylvania.
- D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Allegheny County, Deed Books, vol. 2095, p. 454.

Deed Files, VA Medical Center, Aspinwall Division. On file at Engineering Services, VA Medical Center, Oakland Division, Pittsburgh, PA.

Historic Architectural Drawings -- Aspinwall Facility. Various files held at Engineering Services, VA Medical Center, Oakland Division, Pittsburgh, PA.

Historical Files -- Aspinwall Facility. Various files held at Engineering Services, VA Medical Center, Oakland Division, Pittsburgh, PA.

*Hospital Handbook*, Veterans Administration Hospitals, Pittsburgh and Aspinwall Divisions (1962, 1965, 1967). On file at Engineering Services, VA Medical Center, Oakland Division, Pittsburgh, PA.

National Register Of Historic Places -- Nomination Form (1980).

*The Nation Builds For Those Who Served: An Introduction to the Architectural Heritage of the Veterans Administration* (Washington: The Veterans Administration and The National Building Museum, 1980).

*National Hospital Day at United States Veterans Administration Facility, Aspinwall, Pennsylvania* (1945). Pamphlet on file at Engineering Services, VA Medical Center, Oakland Division, Pittsburgh, PA.

*25 Anniversary: Veterans Administration Hospital, Aspinwall, Pennsylvania* (1950). Pamphlet on file at Engineering Services, VA Medical Center, Oakland Division, Pittsburgh, PA.

2. Secondary and published sources:

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*Federal Architect*, 7 (January 1937): 37, 43.

*Federal Architect*, 12 (July 1943): 12-13.

*Federal Architect*, 13 (October 1944).

Starr, Paul, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (New York: Basic Books, 1982).

U.S. Veterans' Bureau, *Annual Reports of the Director United States Veterans' Bureau* (Washington: GPO, 1925-1929).

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Part IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation was undertaken in July 1989 in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement between the United States Veterans Administration, the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative measure prior to the demolition of the subject buildings at the Aspinwall Division Medical Center.

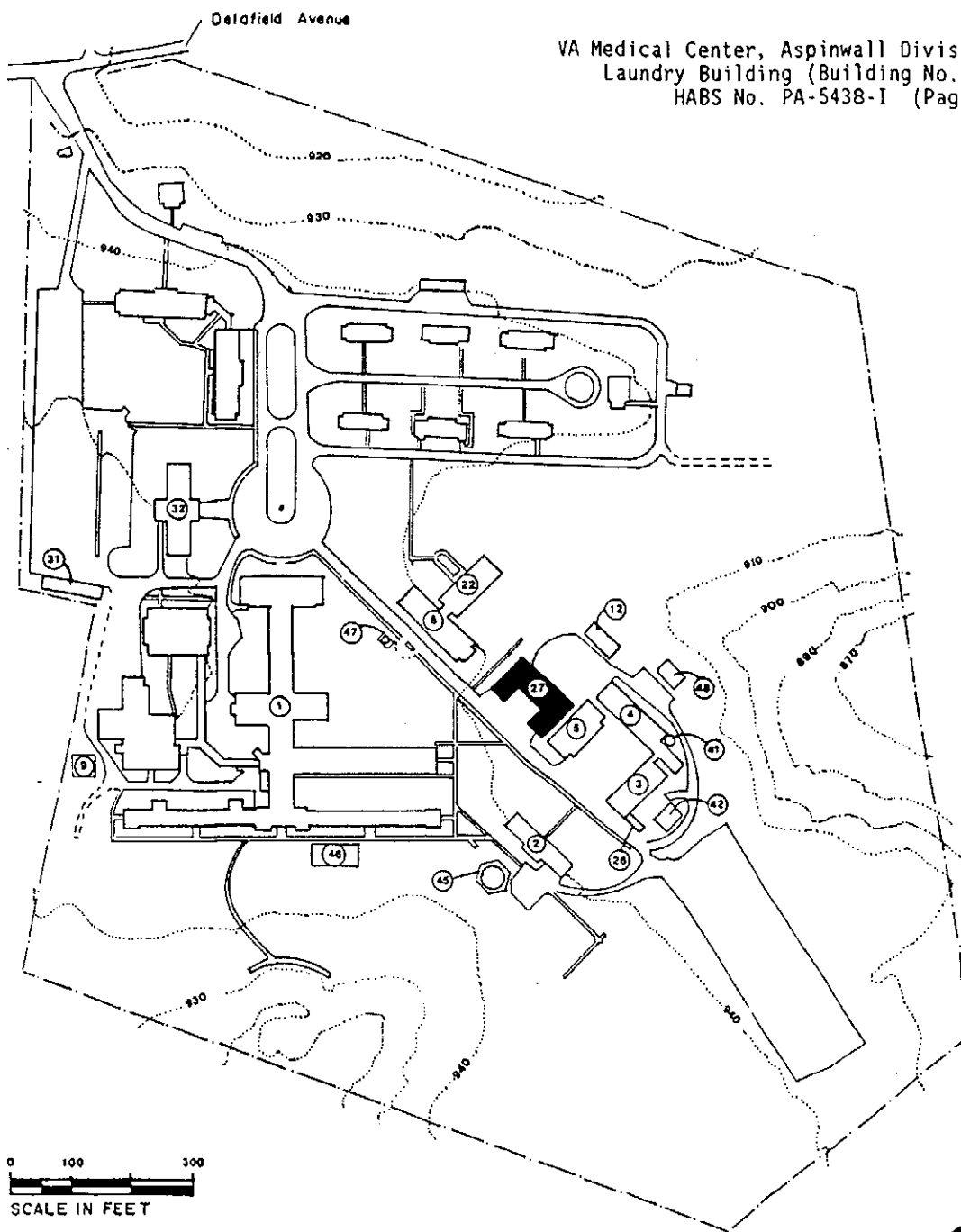
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September 1989



Delafield Avenue

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SCALE IN FEET

HABS SURVEY NO. PA-5438

